

8-21-1869

Letter from Anne Whitney, Heidelberg, Germany, to Sarah Whitney, 1869 August 21

Anne Whitney

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Heidelberg Sat. 21 Aug. / 69 - 1

Your letter of 3^d Aug. near Larch with Ersk.
& Garrison's accomp^y. was awaiting me at the
bankers on our return from Cologne. We
profoundly commiserate ^{for} condition of un-
satisfied craving as regards decent food in
the three-storied boarding-house in Plymouth.
My experiences of the last 2 years & more
have lit-in a little light-upon my brain
as to former status of being. I know that
a great part of the physical distress
I had at Shelburne the last time I was
there when the day-cold rode me trium-
phant, was owing to my semi-starving
condition. I used to go to that detestable
Gatus' board weak & hungry. I come away
weaker & more ravenous. Having been
unable to grapple with the difficulties
of the situation - you were right - to take
to coffee & pie if you found them more
palatable than the simple fare - or
anything, but try to eat-minor food
wh. is the next thing to eating none. as
it is not in nature to fill oneself that
way. No one ever lives so well as
it happens, as since we left Munich
the last time. At the Hotels & temporary
stopping-places we take table d'Hotel wh
is much superior in form to that in
~~that~~ ^{the} ~~Spain~~, & nothing so well agreed
with me, - except ^{now}, not as regards taste
or fare. but - results, - as the composite

excellence of varied & ample courses -
At Frankfurt we were at an admirable
Hotel, & not expensive, with a delicious
table & hotel - here in our little hill-side
pension, where & the same we eat & sleep
all in the same room - we are served
every day with ^{one} fr & Cellent soup & courses
of fish & ^{one} meat - or two of meat with
vegetables & each, & a salad & dessert of
pudding or something sweet - all well
cooked - & excellently conceived sometimes &
executed - we so often wish that you might
be as well served when you leave off Yankee
fare! - My expenses in short have
elaborated one drop of what I conceive
to be pure wisdom - ^{the} wh. I enclose hoping
it may prove valuable to you - Economize
in every possible way bef. ~~you~~ ^{the} scrimping
in ~~the~~ ^{the} matter of food. In fact
Mr. Manning's lucubrations have effloresced
in a similar epigram in many a letter
to his daughter, & I perhaps but find in
my experience the truth of his philosophy.
I have probably treated you & the same
council bef. it is certain we have not
so conformed to the spirit of it - as
of late, & it seems as if we had never
been so well on either side the water
as now. The reader I feared humidity
for Abby was on acct. of the rheumatic
trouble she has had in the shoulder
& chest, & wh. in fact was developed by

it - but she was well again on leaving
Monier & the Counties! I pray that the
apparent good effect of N. H. air on
you & Katy may not prove fallacious.
O. for a ten-footer in Shelburne, when
for a few months of summer you might
draw fr. breaths without pain! I think
father & mother wd enjoy that. I am
sorry Katy has not gone among the true
mountains - there is the sweet & humble
air for her. Carrie does not say anything
about her own health - nor do you - & I
trust all is well again.

I sit on a fitting corner of the castle
platform - on the earth indeed, that
covers the wall of a gigantic tower
razed to this level - in the ground that
was the pleasure-ground of the Palatines.
Elizabeth the grand daughter of Mary Scots,
laid out by her in garden shape with
lawns, hedges & shrubberies & what are
at this day great trees, oaks & cypresses.
The main features are the same I am
told as in the old time. Within 20 feet
of me in the tower that makes the N. W.
corner of the castle & wh. might have
been 60 feet - drains down an hundred
feet below my level & its solid base in
the earth & rises above this level, I know
not how many feet to its fire &
bathe - blasted summit - one range

of great windows only left - Below,
the ivied walls with statues in the
niches on the garden side (high up)
& half the magnificent structure torn
away on the further ^{river} side by cannon-
balls. This Castle is the very ideal,
with its rich color (freestone) & the
woods surging up all round it & the
wooded heights against wh. it sits -
with its winding stairs in the walls &
strong subterranean passages to the
town below - "blind ways provided"
for observations days - with its vast
cullerges - its unexpected loops -
holes & outlooks, doors & windows &
watchtowers, with its noble walks
& avenues - openings & outlooks over
the subject-land - little city & plain.
Thank the Lord the days that built
such an all gone - the feudal propi-
ety is gone - but the King still lives
at the expense of the subject. Think
of Victoria calling on Parliament to pay
the ^{army} debts of Wales! & Poor Law paid
them!!

But we have been down the Rhine,
went from here to Bingen by rail,
some accident to the boat preventing
our taking it at Mayence where we
waited 2 hours or so for it. But the

best part of the river is between Bingen²
& Borm - we had cloudy weather by wh.
we were gaining on the whole - tho we
may have lost some of the more
interesting aspects. From Bingen & Co.
along the banks are generally precipitous
wooded rocky or vine covered hills -
(mostly the latter) running down to the
water edge - sometimes with a bit of
plain between water & hills where towns
or villages meet. There are no mountains
nor anything like the noble variety of
the Hudson banks - but almost every
town discloses a ruined or other castle
set upon the projecting spur of a hill
or crowning the pinnacle of the highest
steep - many of these are handsome
ruins - all more or less dark & overgrown
with yew, looking like organized earth,
a part of the soil in wh. they stand.
& ~~the~~ themes of song & story as you know.
They have an instinct that may fairly
risk comparison with the winding groves
of our older world. Father Rhine
is a pretty river - not clear like our
Hudson, to be sure, but its renown is
well established - it is no trifling
reputation, got up by newspapers.
The effect is magical of these lovely
keeps, breaking upon the eye as we
sweep from point to point on the stream.

Below Coblenz the valley opens more
 & one gets further views of some higher
 hills - but the castles fall off. One
 thing I must repeat if it has been
 said before: whatever may be said of
 the juice, the vine is destructive
 of allusions - The hills are deprived
 of their charm for this unfortunate
 business of wine-making. It certainly
 need not be so - for in Italy the vine
 is a delight - all hanging in garlands
 from tree to tree. Or, if here in this
 colder climate it is necessary to have
 so much sun & air, one wishes they
 they wd. afford to encircle a little
 beauty & instead of covering endless
 lines of hills with vineyard, leave
 here & there a true or bit of woodland
 or even a grass or grain field. Again
 when the fields are variously cultivated
 with grains & kitchen-vegs. they
 make not so pleasant a sight as
 our home farms, because they are
 laid out in little oblong squares of
 one thing & another & tho there is
 no fence, hedge or boundary mark
 between the lands of different owners,
 the whole country has a patched &
 scrappy look not ~~so~~ reflecting
 to the eye as our broader style of

cultivation wh. the frequent grey stone
 fences do not mar. We spent the
 first night in Coblenz. The eng-
 neer who lives on an island in the
 river, opposite the city & whose equi-
 we met 2 summers ago said we must
 promise to come & see him when we
 went down the Rhine - but as it was
 almost morally certain ^{that} we wd. be
 on then summer vacation we did
 not take the time. The next afternoon
 we went on to Cologne where we had
 a cheaped passage for 26 hours
 & then took card for Heidelberg -
 Certainly Geln may have suffered
 in the last few years - but it was
 a pity she shd. ^{be} grown ^{so} deserted
 & she had so. We were
 with the sort of antiquarian satisfaction
 a scholar might have in finding
 a Roman land mark, the occasional
 weavings of our ladies, as one of the
 "two & seventies" or one of the "several"
 & of a truth an important chamber-
 maid at the hotel, the first ill-mannered
 servant - we have encountered in our travels
 furnished an illustration of the
 "hideous wenches" wh. we had not
 anticipated. Cologne, tho just as

not dirtier than some cities on our
side. It is not vile like a good deal
of Rome, but it wants sweeping badly.
& the Hollands House wants it more.
it is the very dirtiest hotel at which
we have stayed. & we were glad to come
away. But there is another chapter to
Cologne wh. shd. begin & finish the book
& that is about her Churches. That an old
Roman colony settled there, & thence its name -
that it is full of reminiscences of the Roman
people in its architecture & customs, you may
learn by refer. to the Cyclopaedia. But for
my own part I see no hint of Rome
in the beautiful Churches we saw there, but
on the contrary we found them wholly u-
nique. The Cathedral began in 1270
was from time to time built upon for
2 & 300 years ~~But~~ ^{in all that time} only the choir & a
part of the nave, ~~completed~~ ^{rather} or rather
carried up to the tops of the columns &
covered with a wooden roof. So it re-
mained for 300 years & in 1830 the orig-
inal plan was taken up again. The fragment
already built had become almost a ruin.
The last 2 Russian Kings have taken
hold of the work in good earnest - the present
King having contributed some millions of roubles
& the restoration is being done most beautifully
the poor stone of wh. it was made being
replaced piece by piece with that wh.
is durable & the whole carried on according
to the plan of the architect whose name

is lost. I have, as I have said, are all
ready built - & an iron roof substituted for
the wooden one. One curious fact - I call
restoration from the guide book as this
sort of literature doesn't tell much in
your way. The 2 principal towers (not
yet built) were to have been raised accord-
ing to the orig. design to the height of 500
feet higher than Strasbourg Cath. The
Cath. had slight the stones stood for
centuries & was not taken down until
1860 when the long cherished notion of
finishing the towers was on the eve of
fulfilment. The whole length of the ch.
is 1511 feet & 161 high - when completed
will be acc. to the author - "the most
stupendous Gothic monument in existence".
It certainly is grander than anything I
have ever always yet? St. Peter's with
wh. it is not to be compared, they are
so diff. I sat in it for an hour perhaps
in one spot wholly possessed by its noble
& satisfying presence - listening to the sound
wh. came from I know not where, but
wh. in that vast & precious space was
all translated into a kind of mild thunder
~~gathering~~ rising & falling in regular
movement-like waves of the sea. I shall
never know what it was - perhaps it was
in a trance. Well since then we have been
in Strasbourg (we did not stop in Baden B.)
so there is a limit to human endurance &

Lake Geneva - Vevey - Chillon - Aug. 28th
"2" - what shall I say. For the time
we fail me - as St. Paul says. I think
tho. I become daily stronger in my biblical
quotations. To speak of Streets & of
Bâle. The spire of St. Peter's is its wonder
& shd. be seen from the inside, they say,
to appreciate the delicacy of its execution.
It is the highest meeting perhaps you
know in the world & overtops the loftiest
pyramid by a score of feet or so. But
confess the tower disappointed me.
But - the inside of the Cathedral is pure
beauty. It is half Byzantine & half
Gothic & whether John Ruskin wd
like the combination or no, - is all one.
In my mind they marry well. Up in
one corner of a little gallery beside the
choir, is the figure of a green little old
man with a ~~clonched~~ hat ~~looking~~ sitting
& leaning forward upon the railing &
looking out upon the wonderful growth
of aisles & arches. It is the architect -
who himself placed his sculptured por-
trait there in col. stone that he
might appear forever in contemplation
of this achievement - this one act, wherein
he took his "station & degree". He did
bef. the work was finished. but his
daughter carried it on & one of the great
pillars of the transept covered, high

up with life-size statues is pointed out
as the work of her own chisel. On another
pillar under or on the Capital is the
statue of the man who designed the great
glorious ~~round~~ window over the main
portal (40 feet diam.) who looks out
from under his shading hands into that
distance of sunset. splendours & does not
hesitate to say that it is good. It was
a half hour of agonizing delight - there in the
Cathedral - for we had laid our plans
to have only a peep at the city & go on
to Basel. So we tore off to a photo-
shop & the little remaining party also
with pertake off. We saw the ~~church~~ ^{ministry}
in Bâle in much the same way, hovering
like a pair of hawks between the church
& shops. This also is a mixture of Moorish
& Gothic & said to be the loveliest - portu-
gale in Christendom. We agree that
these 3. Köln, Stras? & Bâle were worth
all the journey - & that we wd. not have
left them out for a good deal more of
the fatigue of travel. Then we came on
to our old home in Lausanne / wh. has fallen
into other hands / stayed there a night & came
on to this region, within a few steps of
Chillon - & find ourselves very well pleased
here with lake & mountains in fair
array fronting our windows - & here we
stay till we go south I suppose. It is
now more than 2 months since we left

Rome & it has been enough of holiday & I
wish I might go back to work at once.
There is some satisfaction in thinking
that besides the travel we have accomplished
a good deal of necessary work & are better
prepared for repose of mind the coming
year. I have not yet told you because
it was a secret that Aunt (E.M.) contemplates
coming out here this fall. She was waiting
to know Abby's opinion about her coming
to determine. She writes that she enjoys as
much as she ever did (she is 66 years). We
want very much to have her come - but Abby
feels a good deal of anxiety & responsibility
about it & writes that she must not
come alone & must come by the fastest
& best steamer. She is very sea sick.
I rec'd. a note from Mrs. Filds when
in Huddersburg asking to know where I was to
be found as she was looking for me. As
they were in Salisbury at the time I hardly think
we shall effect a junction. Direct my next
letter to ~~Stoke~~ & Packington Gloucester
(Magway) We are staying at
Pension Mason a very good house mainly
filled with Eng. people & some half dozen
of our compatriots. Here I hope we can read
a little & that I shall be able to work out
some designs for the winter.
Sept. 1. Some acute individual writing from
America was Eng. paper - airing the views of
diff. parties as to the prospects of success of
the or Collegiate boat race. Sounds up somewhat
after this fashion - Well - we'd like the Eng.

folks to know that if they have more bone &
muscle & beat on this ere fight - that that
fellow Simmons who goes over there is some-
body's cousin & old parson Ripley
& 3^d grandson of Walter Emerson & trained
on Concord river under the eye of this that
& the other - I don't know who the led sin^s
may be, but I wish our beloved Compagnons
w'd not bless them them folks quite so
broadly. It makes one blush all over. If you
have not - see what I allude to. Know that
my little bit of brevity doesn't do it justice.
I hope our people will wait quietly for the next
challenge - & not give any more - or better, conclude
to stay at home & mind their lessons in any case.
We have a fatal way, on the Amerⁿ shore - of
overstraining & running things into the ground.
The Eng^l are more composed & not given to this
foolish exaggeration of persons & things. Adios
and best love - There is more I was going to say, but it
has slipped my mind & the former allowance has reached
its limit - I fancy - I long for the next letter wh. will
give further news of the Mt. joining & how it came
with you dear Sarah & with our friend Susan
a great deal of love - I hope my dear mother has
had no return of the trouble that I've dealt with
so successfully - But if she has it - why, there
as I say, thank heaven! I'd sum to be greatly
coming down - Hail to the Chief, (Bartlett) who in
triumph advances - I have not heard from
the Hemmons for a long time - & hope they are now
safe on the other shore - Give a great deal of love

2 weeks for a happy summer with families
places & persons - I want to know if they had a
good time in Eng. I think Mr. Tucker is Mary's
best friend & with the two, ask him to send out to
Rome ^{the} good responsible young architect - St. Thomas
has so much work to do that we find we can't trust
our mouths with him - There is work in Rome for half
a dozen - I know numbers of people who will be glad to see
somebody else come ~~to~~ help. I don't love my beloved Rome & keep
well - In Edward's day, Monks' acct. is right as
far as I know - Since that, they have drawn 2500 £s.
about half of wh. was for my own maintenance here.
Till 1840. Bavaria is Catholic. Consequently Munich is
Cath. - I don't believe the Powers are warm Papal -
but then begging may be interpreted a beggars &
pelled - I run no risks of that sort she will under-
stand. I have not seen a word about the position.
All of ye - ever.